

# Wittgenstein: Readings from his late works

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2022–23 Winter Term

No. of Credits: 2. No. of ECTS credits: 4

Time Period of the Course: one semester

Course Level: MA

## Description

The course will be based on a close reading of parts of the *Philosophical Investigations* and other late work by Wittgenstein. We start by discussing Wittgenstein's thoughts on the relations of brain and mind, and continue with Wittgensteinian thoughts on the imagination. This will be followed by the main topic of the course, Wittgenstein's ideas on sensation language and concepts, and on the possibility of meaningful language about private sensations (misleadingly usually called, the private language argument), as contained primarily in *PI* §§243ff. In the process, we shall learn how to read the *Investigations*, this most influential philosophical text of the twentieth century.

A visit to the Haus Wittgenstein, the house Wittgenstein designed together with Paul Engelmann for his sister Margarethe Stonborough-Wittgenstein, is also planned.

## Course requirements

Attendance, readings and participation in discussion.

## Course goals

Better knowledge and understanding of Wittgenstein's insightful and highly influential ideas.  
Familiarity with the way Wittgenstein's texts should be read and studied.

## Learning outcomes

A better informed and critical approach to questions in the philosophy of mind and language, and to philosophical methodology more generally.

## Readings

The main readings are from the *Philosophical Investigations* and other late writings by Wittgenstein.

The secondary literature on Wittgenstein is huge. Students unfamiliar with Wittgenstein's thought would do well to read some introduction to it. Some good introductions are:

- Kenny, A. 1973. *Wittgenstein*. Penguin Books.
- Schroeder, S. 2006. *Wittgenstein: The Way Out of the Fly-bottle*. Polity Press.

Another helpful book is Hans-Johann Glock's *A Wittgenstein Dictionary* (Blackwell 1995), which contains discussions of practically all the main issues that occupy Wittgenstein in his writings, as well as an annotated detailed bibliography, albeit not updated.

The books by Baker and Hacker are the most detailed and in-depth study of the *Philosophical Investigations* and contain, apart from a section-by-section exegesis, many helpful essays:

Baker, G. P. and Hacker, P. M. S. *An Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*. Volumes I–IV (the last two volumes written by Hacker alone; the first three were revised by him). Blackwell.

It is recommended that the students consult at least some of these books before and during the discussion of the relevant paragraphs in class.

### Assessment

Term paper of approximately 2500 words, preferably interpreting passages from Wittgenstein's writings. Students should consult Ben-Yami about the paper's subject.

### Division into units

Units 1, 5 and 6 are one class each. Units 2 and 3 will probably take a bit more. The rest of the meetings will be devoted to unit 4.

1. Introduction
2. Wittgenstein on Brain and Mind, *Zettel* 608–613
3. Wittgensteinian thoughts on the imagination, *PI* II iii, *PI* §§363–97
4. *PI* 243ff: Sensation concepts and language
5. Visit to Haus Wittgenstein
6. Last Class